



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**EFFECTS OF TIME OF SECOND NITROGEN APPLICATION
ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF RICE PLANTS**

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EFFECTS OF TIME OF SECOND NITROGEN APPLICATION
ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF RICE PLANTS

By

Sariam bt. Hj. Othman

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of
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It is hereby certified that we have read this thesis entitled 'Effects of Time of Second Nitrogen Application on Growth and Development of Rice Plants' by Sariam Haji Othman, and in our opinion it is satisfactory in terms of scope, quality, and presentation as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Agricultural Science



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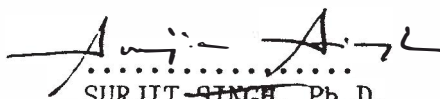
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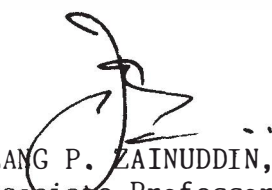


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF PLATES	xii
ABSTRACT	xiii
ABSTRAK	xv
 CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION	 1
 CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW	 4
RICE RESPONSE TO NITROGEN (N) FERTILIZER	4
NITROGEN EFFICIENCY IN WETLAND RICE	5
Nitrification-denitrification Losses of N	6
Ammonia Volatilization	6
Leaching Losses of N	8
TIME OF N APPLICATION	8
EFFECTS OF SECOND N APPLICATION AT SUCCESSIVE GROWTH STAGES ON THE GRAIN YIELD AND YIELD COMPONENTS	11
Nitrogen Topdressing at the Vegetative Stage	12
Nitrogen Topdressing at the Reproductive Stage	14
Nitrogen Topdressing at Heading and Ripening Stage	17



	Page
CHAPTER 3 : MATERIALS AND METHODS	20
POT EXPERIMENT	22
Growth Measurements	23
Grain Yield and Yield Components	24
Plant N Analysis	24
FIELD EXPERIMENT	25
Growth Measurements	28
Grain Yield and Yield Components	30
Plant N Analysis	31
Milling Test	31
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA	32
CHAPTER 4 : RESULTS	33
PLANT SECTIONING	33
POT EXPERIMENT	44
Plant Height	44
Tiller Number	46
Yield Components	47
1. Panicle Number Per Hill	47
2. Spikelet Number Per Hill	47
3. Percentage of Filled Grains	51
4. Grain Weight	51
Grain and Straw Yield	51
1. Grain Yield	51
2. Straw Yield	53

	Page
3. Plant N Concentration	55
Grain Crude Protein content	58
1. Total N Uptake and N Use Efficiency	60
2. Correlation Between Grain Yield and Yield Components	60
FIELD EXPERIMENT	62
Plant Height	62
Tiller Number	67
Yield Components	69
1. Panicle Number Per Hill	69
2. Spikelet Number Per Hill	69
3. Percentage of Filled Grains	73
4. Grain Weight	73
Grain and Straw Yield	75
1. Grain Yield	75
2. Straw Yield	75
Plant N Concentration	77
Grain Crude Protein Content	80
Total N Uptake and N Use Efficiency	82
Rice Milling Quality	84
Correlation Between Grain Yield and Yield Components	86
CHAPTER 5 : DISCUSSION	88
PANICLE DEVELOPMENT	88

	Page
PLANT GROWTH	90
YIELD COMPONENTS	90
Panicule Number Per Hill	90
Spikelet Number Per Hill	91
Percentage of Filled Grains	93
Grain Weight	94
GRAIN AND STRAW YIELD	94
Grain Yield	94
Straw Yield	97
PLANT N CONCENTRATION AND GRAIN CRUDE PROTEIN CONTENT	98
Plant N Concentration	98
Grain Crude Protein Content	99
TOTAL N UPTAKE AND N USE EFFICIENCY	100
RICE MILLING QUALITY	102
CORRELATION BETWEEN GRAIN YIELD AND YIELD COMPONENTS	103
CHAPTER 6 : SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	104
LITERATURE CITED	108



LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
I	Some Physical and Chemical Characteristics of Kundor Tualang Soil Series	21
II	Details of Treatments in Pot and Field Experiments	27
III	Plant Height as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Pot Experiment)	45
IV	Tiller Number Per Hill At 21, 30, 45 and 60 Days After Transplanting as Affected by Time of Second N Application	48
V	Yield Components as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Pot Experiment)	49
VI	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Grain and Straw Yield	52
VII	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Plant N Concentration and Grain Protein Content (Pot Experiment)	56
VIII	Effect of Time of Second N Application on N Uptake and N Use Efficiency (Pot Experiment)	61
IX	Plant Height as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Field Experiment)	66
X	Tiller Number Per Hill at 21, 30, 45 and 60 Days After Transplanting as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Field Experiment)	68
XI	Yield Components as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Field Experiment)	70
XII	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Grain and Straw Yield (Field Experiment)	76
XIII	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Plant N Concentration and Grain Protein Content (Field Experiment)	78



TABLE		Page
XIV	Effect of Time of Second N Application on N Uptake and N Use Efficiency (Field Experiment)	83
XV	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Rice Milling Quality	85

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		Page
1	Field experimental layout	27
2	Diagramatic Representation of a 4.0 m x 5.0 m Plot to Show Hills Used for Growth Measurements, Plant Sampling and Harvest Area	29
3	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Spikelet Number Per Hill (Pot Experiment)	50
4	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Plant N Concentration (Pot Experiment)	57
5	Grain Protein Content as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Pot Experiment)	59
6	Correlation Between Number of Panicles Per Hill and Grain Yield (Pot Experiment)	63
7	Correlation Between Number of Spikelets Per Hill and Grain Yield (Pot Experiment)	64
8	Correlation Between Percentage of Filled Grains and Grain Yield (Pot Experiment)	65
9	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Panicle Number Per Hill (Field Experiment)	71
10	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Spikelet Number Per Hill (Field Experiment)	72
11	Percentage of Filled Grains as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Field Experiment)	74
12	Effect of Time of Second N Application on Plant N Concentration (Field Experiment)	79
13	Grain Protein Content as Affected by Time of Second N Application (Field Experiment)	81
14	Correlation Between Number of Spikelets Per Hill and Grain Yield (Field Experiment)	87



LIST OF PLATES

PLATE		Page
I	Vegetative Shoot Apex at 39 DAT (x 100)	35
II	Vegetative Shoot Apex at 42 DAT (x 100)	35
III	First Bract Initiation Stage at 45 DAT (x 100)	36
IV	Late Differentiation Stage of Primary Rachis Branches at 48 DAT (x 100)	37
V	Late Differentiation Stage of Secondary Rachis Branches at 51 DAT (x 100)	38
VI	Initial Stage of Spikelet Differentiation at 54 DAT (x 100)	39
VII	Middle Stage of Spikelet Differentiation at 57 DAT (x 40)	40
VIII	Late Stage of Spikelet Differentiation at 60 DAT (x 40)	41
IX	Differentiation Stage of Pollen Mother Cell at 63 DAT (x 400)	42
X	Extine Formation Stage of Pollen Grains at 66 DAT (x 400)	42
XI	Early Ripe Stage of Pollen Grains at 69 DAT (x 400)	43
XII	A Fully Exserted Panicle With Well Filled Grains From Second N Application at 39 DAT	54
XIII	Poorly Exserted Panicles with Empty Grains and Renewed Vegetative Growth from Second N Application at 66 DAT	54



An abstract of the thesis presented to the Senate of
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June 1987

Supervisor : Dr. Surjit Singh
: Syed Zain b. Syed Hassan
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Pot and field experiments were conducted to study the effect of different times of second nitrogen (N) application on growth, yield, protein content of grain and milling quality of rice (Oryza sativa L variety Seberang). Second N application was carried out at three-day intervals from 39 to 78 and 39 to 81 days after transplanting in pot and field experiments, respectively. Experimental design used was a randomized complete block design with treatments replicated three times.

In the pot experiment, significantly higher yields were obtained from second N application made from late vegetative



(39 days after transplanting) to late primary rachis branch differentiating stage (48 days after transplanting) and at middle stage of spikelet differentiation (57 days after transplanting). Time of second N application had no significant effect on grain yield in the field but second N applied at panicle initiation stage (45 days after transplanting) resulted in the highest grain yield. In the field, second N application made from late vegetative to late primary rachis branch differentiating stage and from extine formation stage (66 days after transplanting) onwards significantly increased panicle number and percentage of filled grains, respectively.

Nitrogen concentration in straw was significantly increased with a delay in second N application. Second N applied at heading (75 days after transplanting) significantly increased N concentration and protein content in the grain. A significantly higher milled rice recovery was obtained from second N application made at early grain filling stage (78 days after transplanting).

Simple linear regression analysis showed that total spikelet number per hill contributed significantly ($r=0.880$ for pot and $r=0.554$ for field experiment) to grain yield. Hence, for a medium-term maturing variety such as Seberang grown on Kundor Tualang soil series (Aquic Tropofluvent) under climatic and cultural practices of this study, second N application at panicle initiation stage is recommended to attain the highest grain yield.

Abstrak tesis yang diserahkan kepada Senate Universiti Pertanian Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian dari keperluan-keperluan untuk Ijazah Sarjana Sains Pertanian

"EFFECTS OF TIME OF SECOND NITROGEN APPLICATION
ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF RICE PLANTS"

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Kajian kesan masa pembajaan kedua nitrogen (N) keatas pertumbuhan, hasil, kandungan protin dan mutu pengilangan beras (Oryza sativa L varieti Seberang) telah dijalankan di dalam pasu dan sawah. Pembajaan kedua N dilakukan selang tiga hari dari 39 hingga 78 dan 39 hingga 81 hari selepas mengubah, masing-masing bagi kajian pasu dan sawah. Rekabentuk percubaan yang digunakan ialah rekabentuk blok lengkap rawak dengan tiga replikasi.

Pertambahan hasil yang bererti diperolehi dalam kajian pasu dari pembajaan kedua N dari peringkat akhir fasa tampang

(39 hari selepas mengubah) hingga peringkat akhir perbezaan dahan tangkai primer (48 hari selepas mengubah) dan pada peringkat pertengahan pembezaan spikelet (57 hari selepas mengubah). Masa pembajaan kedua N tidak memberi kesan bererti keatas hasil dalam kajian sawah tetapi hasil tertinggi diperolehi dari pembajaan kedua N pada peringkat permulaan pembentukan tangkai (45 hari selepas mengubah). Pembajaan kedua N dari peringkat akhir fasa tampang hingga peringkat akhir pembezaan dahan tangkai primer dan dari peringkat pembentukan ekstine (66 hari selepas mengubah) hingga peringkat yang seterusnya, masing-masing memberi pertambahan bererti kepada bilangan tangkai dan peratus biji bernas dalam kajian sawah.

Kelewatan pembajaan kedua N memberi pertambahan bererti kepada kandungan N dalam jerami. Pertambahan bererti dalam kandungan N dan protin dalam biji padi diperolehi dari pembajaan kedua N pada peringkat terbit tangkai (75 hari selepas mengubah). Perolehan beras yang tinggi dan bererti diperolehi dari pembajaan kedua N pada peringkat awal masuk isi (78 hari selepas mengubah).

Analisis regresi linear ringkas menunjukkan bahawa jumlah spikelet seperdu memberi sumbangan bererti ($r=0.880$ dari kajian pasu dan $r=0.554$ dari kajian sawah) kepada hasil. Oleh yang demikian, bagi varieti dengan tempuh matang sederhana seperti Seberang ditanam di tanah siri Kundor Tualang (Aquic Tropofluvent) dalam cuaca dan dengan amalan kultura seperti

kajian ini, pembajaan kedua N pada peringkat permulaan pembentukan tangkai adalah disyorkan untuk mendapatkan hasil tertinggi.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rice (Oryza sativa L) is an important food crop and forms the staple diet of the people in Malaysia. The total area cultivated with rice is 622,500 ha of which about 430,000 ha are in Peninsular Malaysia where 70 percent of the area is provided with irrigation and drainage facilities (Lim, 1986).
-1
The national average yield is about 3.0 Mg ha although higher yields have been obtained from some areas where soils are fertile with adequate irrigation and drainage facilities.

In Malaysia, the method of planting rice is mainly transplanting although direct seeding has recently been introduced in limited areas. This could be due to the more stable yield from transplanted rice which is easier to manage and harvest, especially where mechanization is not possible.

Fertilizer is a necessity in rice cultivation for attaining high yields. The Malaysian Government has therefore provided a fertilizer subsidy scheme for rice farmers since 1979 aimed at encouraging farmers to use fertilizers and continue planting rice. The objective of this subsidy is to reduce production costs and thereby increase profits. Through this scheme, farmers with less than 2.4 ha are given 4.0 kg



ammophos (11:48), 40 kg urea and 80 kg NPK mixture (17.5-15.5-10.0) for each ha thev plant.

Although fertilizer application is widely practised in this country, yields are still generally low. One of the reasons for this could be the improper timing of application, especially N. Among the nutrients required by rice plants, N is the most important fertilizer element which gives the highest response in terms of grain yield. However, the efficiency of applied N for rice is extremely low, whereby only 30-40 percent or sometimes even less is recovered by the rice plant (De Datta, 1978). Hence, one of the best ways of increasing the efficiency is by timing N application to synchronize with the demand of the rice plant (Nagarajah et al., 1975). For efficient grain production, N is required at several growth stages and its application at each of these stages will influence development of the yield components and subsequently grain yield. Studies in Japan indicated that yield was more influenced by time of N application than the rate applied (Kimura and Chiba, 1943a).

Split application of N has been recommended to increase uptake efficiency and to provide continuous supply of N for rice. For transplanted rice, two split applications, one half of total N applied as basal and incorporated before transplanting or broadcast at early tillering and the remaining half topdressed at panicle initiation stage (about 25 days before heading) was found to give satisfactory results

(Matsushima, 1979). But some reports showed that second N application at 30 days before heading (Koyama et al., 1973) or just before the reduction division stage which is about 18 days before heading (Matsushima, 1979) resulted in a yield comparable to, if not better than that when N was applied at 25 days before heading. On the other hand, N topdressing at heading was found to increase N concentration and hence protein content in the grain (De Datta et al., 1972). The percentage of head rice which is of greatest economic value was also reported to be improved by N topdressing at heading (Seetanun and De Datta, 1973).

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. to study the effect of time of second N application on growth, yield, protein content and milling quality of rice variety Seberang, and
2. to determine the growth stage at which second N application is most effective in increasing grain yield.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

RICE RESPONSE OF N FERTILIZER

Nitrogen is the major limiting nutrient element for rice production. It is especially so in tropical countries where highly N responsive rice varieties are grown. Most experiments have shown that large increase in yield almost always result when N fertilizer is added. Roy (1981) reported an average increase of 38 to 101 percent from treatments with additional N over rice yield of control plots in experiments and demonstrations on farmers' field in most of the rice growing areas. Cumulative results of the multilocal fertilizer trials conducted in different rice areas of Malaysia from 1982-1985 showed an average grain yield increase of 1.0 Mg ha^{-1} and 1.2 Mg ha^{-1} from the standard treatment of 90 kg N ha^{-1} over controls without N in transplanted and direct seeded rice, respectively (MARDI, 1984). More than two-fold yield increase from N fertilizer has also been reported by Sims and Place (1968), where grain yield of 6812 kg ha^{-1} was obtained with the application of 157 kg N ha^{-1} as compared to 3050 kg ha^{-1} from plots without N application for variety Vegold.

Although high yielding varieties require heavy rates of N for maximum grain yield, excessive application of this nutrient

results in a yield reduction. This could be due to increased lodging, heavy mutual shading of leaves, delayed maturity, increased damage from insect pests and diseases as well as low grain quality (Hall et al., 1968 and Evatt, 1964). Excessive application of N may also pollute the environment through overflow or leaching of N from rice fields (Ukita et al., 1972).

NITROGEN EFFICIENCY IN WETLAND RICE

Although new high yielding varieties which respond well to N are available and extensively planted, the efficiency of N fertilizer uptake for rice is rather low. A recovery of between 30 and 40 percent, and in some cases even less, of applied N by wetland rice has been reported (Prasad et al., 1970 and De Datta, 1978). Even with good agronomic practices, similar low recovery in the tropics was observed (Prasad and De Datta, 1979). With best agronomic practices, the recovery of ¹⁵N-labelled fertilizer by the crop may be as high as 68 percent (De Datta et al., 1968).

The low efficiency of N uptake from wetland rice is due to the submergence of the soil. In waterlogged soils, chemical and biological conditions induce a peculiar transformation of N together with the operation of several loss mechanisms simultaneously (Ponnamperuma, 1977 and Craswell and De Datta, 1980). The main losses of N in wetland rice soils are through nitrification-denitrification, ammonia volatilization and leaching (MacRae et al., 1968).

Nitrification-denitrification Losses of N

Of the ways in which N may be lost from flooded soils, nitrification and subsequent denitrification are generally accepted to be the most important, where losses ranging from 25 to 90 percent have been reported (Manguiat and Yoshida, 1973). Nitrification-denitrification losses are greater when the soil undergoes annual drying and flooding which are typical of soils for rice cultivation in the tropics (MacRae et al., 1968). Ammonium fertilizer applied to the surface layer of submerged soils is oxidized to nitrate by the nitrifying bacteria. Subsequent movement of nitrate into the reduced or anaerobic soil layer results in losses through denitrification as elemental N and nitrous oxide gases (Craswell and De Datta, 1980). From tracer technique study, Yoshida and Padre (1974) observed that nitrification and subsequent denitrification of ammonium sulfate was most active in the top 2.0 cm soil surface and these activities extended to a depth of 5.0 cm.

Ammonia Volatilization

Application of ammonium-containing or ammonium-forming fertilizer on the wetland soil surface often results in ammonia losses through volatilization (Wahhab et al., 1957 and Kresge and Satchell, 1960). Studies by Mikkelsen and De Datta (1979) indicated that ammonia volatilization losses could vary from 0.25 to 20 percent depending on the method of N application. Losses from surface applied N when poorly incorporated during